

# Order of The Golden Bear

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ESTABLISHED 1900

**Usual Place, February 6th, 2024**

*The meeting was convened at 6:01 PM.*

## **Items for the good of the order:**

- Introduced newly cohort on the the structure of meetings; extending invitation fellows to council meetings
- Fellow encourages fellows to share their truths
- A Fellow reminded the Fellowship to sign-in every meeting to be able to vote, and emphasized to Fellows that ought to be present to get their voices on record
- Warden explained Steward position, as the position is still vacant
- Fellows were encouraged to fill leadership roles for 2024-2025 terms, namely the Chronicler and Warden's position

## **Items for the good of the University: The People's Park**

Warden references both the [People's Park](#) and [UC Berkeley People's Park](#).

Warden opens the floor for discussion with the following leading questions:

- What is the significance of the People's Park in relation to the University and campus community?  
What is the significance to the greater Berkeley community?
- How does the history of the Park play a role in present discussions?
- What solutions have the University/community come to regarding present concerns with the Park?  
What are these impacts, both present and future?
- What effects does the University have on the social/physical/political environment of the Park?  
What effects does the Park have on the social/physical/political environment of the University?
- In what ways can the University uplift its communities in the context of the People's Park? How can the People's Park uplift its communities in the context of the University?
- Potential subtopics to consider:
  - Housing affordability/accessibility
  - History and relationship with the community
  - Safety and wellbeing
- A Fellow opens the discussion by mentioning that the park was built from the 60s Movement, and the University has always tried to build on the People's Park, but the community has always fought back.

During the last rail occurring early January, the University asked people to put their belongings in plastic bags and were moved to a hotel, and will remain there for the next six months. The Fellow ended their remarks stating that People's Park was meant to be a peaceful place.

- The next Fellow speaks on the recent People Park's policing. The Fellow adds that Berkeley has become an over-policing area. The Fellow shared their experience of how police have interrogated them because of their skin color. Never have they felt intimidated by barricades, even after all what people had to say about its unsafety of People's Park.
- Another Fellow applauded the barricades because People's Park was a violent place. The Fellow remarks their agreement that there is finally a plan. The Fellow would love for the University to be diligent, given that this new plan guarantees a high success rate – as this new construction will house a myriad of students.
- A different Fellow speaks on the People's Park protest and hears about the optimistic views on what the Park may become. The Fellow mentions that the ideals are great, but the reality is that People's Park has not been safe. It is terrifying given the threats it presents: purse-snatching, drug trafficking, and the hopeless lack of support from drug overdose. For many years, there has not been a proper ideal. "Let the fellowship not get clouded by utopian ideals. Back then in the 60s, they needed a Unit 4, and now perhaps the University will need more than 10 Units." The Fellow adds that people can see drug needles and drugs in People's Park. The Fellow argues that this is by far the best approach Chancellor Christ has taken, given how it solves student housing issues and addresses drug overdosing. One issue, the Fellow mentions, is that people need to be in this sacred ground in Berkeley (namely, People's Park), when this can be done in different places in Oakland. The Fellow thinks this is the perfect compromise. The Fellow adds that People's Park is not Jerusalem; it is not a sacred palace. That is not how a democracy works. The Fellow ends their remarks by highlighting that it is not intimidating to see a wall or barricades, but it is intimidating to see police lined up with firearms. There is still no explanation why homeless need to be allocated in Berkeley; the Fellow suggests that could be done elsewhere.
- A Fellow raised to question the status quo. Fellow lives in Ohlone Park, which used to be called People's Park, and its common goal was to create a green community – created from the same 60s movement. They add that it is unfortunate to see an ongoing dichotomy: support for student housing versus support for Peoples' Park. It is in the best interest of the University to preserve historic places, they add.
- A Fellow who graduated in 1982 and helped build a stage in Peoples' Park added, "the Park is marked as a historic place." The Fellow contends that those who support the Park also support student housing. That is, People's Park has enough space to be an emergency place in the case of a fire. The Fellow regrets the ongoing violence, homelessness, and drug use at Berkeley. The Fellow brings background information on the legal case by stating that the reason why the case has been on hold (the University versus People's Park) is that the University wanted to build a 17-story place and did not pass an environmental test. The Fellow wonders – during the night when 27 jurisdictions (500+ police officers) pushed out the homeless – how much was spent on overtime for UC Berkeley personnel? The

Fellow added whether the University is administrating funds properly? For instance, the Fellow added, the University cut a 100-year-old tree. The Fellow ended their remarks by stating that people should not live in a state where peacekeepers are repressing their own people.

- Another Fellow urges the Fellowship to ponder on: “How confident is the University on the decisions they are making around the building of units in People’s Park?” The Fellow answers their question by stating that the University’s confidence is diminished. The University has not taken the public views and perspectives into account. The Fellow ended their statement with another question: “How confident is the University in connecting students, alumni, and faculty together?”
- A Fellow posted the following question to the Fellowship: “Why are people who want to build on the People’s Park area Faculty and Admins?”
- A different Fellow acknowledged the previous Fellow’s question. The Fellow proceeded stating the main concern from other students is safety around People’s Park. The Fellow highlighted that students should not be scared of walking on campus at night. Nevertheless, the Fellow gets concerned when Police are on campus, as this poses a threat to students’ lives. The Fellow finds themselves in the middle ground around the current University’s actions. Urges that the people who lived in that area do not go forgotten, and instead consider the community it once fostered.
- Another Fellow adds that they have lived near the Unit 2 Area. The Fellow shared their experience of being physically assaulted around the People’s Park. They added that this would not impact anyone until it occurs to them. Safety is more important, and the Fellow feels more confident now that there are lights and the People’s Park does not seem as a threat anymore.
- A Fellow cautions the Fellowship, when discussing social movements, to detach itself from polarized views. The Order provides a safe haven given the Fellowship’s tenets, but Fellows should avoid polarizing views as their own.
- A Fellow mentions that when equating student housing and homelessness (oftentimes) the University is vilified. Additionally, mentions that last time (and in the past) protesters broke machinery and threw down fences. Housing is not the main concern; the main concern is safety.
- Another Fellow appreciated the opportunity to hear other Fellows’ thoughts, feelings, and ideas. Recalled a Fellow using the word “vacuum.” The Fellow emphasizes that conflict need to occur to arrive at a resolution. Asked the question: “How should we reach the best outcome for the People’s Park issue?” The perspectives that most respond to yield resolutions, which in turn ought to be the outcomes.
- Warden asks: “How has the conversation of People’s Park evolved over time?”
- Another Fellow touches upon the viability of the Order. The Fellow shared that they have been followed home when walking near People’s Park. And urges Fellows to consider history and invited the Fellowship to acknowledge that the University land has never actually owned by them - as this belonged to Natives. And despite land acknowledgments and titles, the University has not abided by it. The University has made a commitment to protect the community, and they should continue to do so.
- A Fellow talks that housing and safety issues are two different ones, and oftentimes people overcomplicate it. The Fellow states that the University has an obligation to the students not to the

homeless. It can then be the City's responsibility to take care of the homeless. Also, building low-income housing should be aimed for low-income students. The Fellow mentions that the Park no longer represents what it used to be (e.g., The Free Speech Movements), instead it represents violence and drugs. Urges everyone to acknowledge that.

- Another Fellow agrees in making the Berkeley area a green area and respecting its history. But it is the University's responsibility to protect it and provide safety.
- Another Fellow questions the previous Fellow, "Are the homeless safe if removed?"
- Another Fellow mentions that People's Park is supposed to be the hub of Unit 4. Fellow dives into the precedents, e.g., when the University cut trees near California Memorial Stadium for earthquake safety measures, and some students were reacting recklessly towards this action the University took. Another instance was when the University installed a volleyball court in People's Park, and the sand was filled with needles. The Fellow understands that cops and barricades are intimidating but it is a temporary solution for the greater good.
- A Fellow brings their attention stating that safety is important and asks whether the University understands what safety means. The Fellow appreciates that some unhoused people were taken care of.
- Another Fellow states that this project most likely will move forward. Agrees that Museum is going to be great, and all the performative things that can be done. But it is necessary to have a higher level of intentionality on the things that will be lost.
- Another Fellow encourages all Fellows to build trust with people "that are not your own."
- A Fellow directly responds to solutions and urges the University to leverage communication channels with local free aids organizations. So, there is a way to provide resources for the needy.
- Another Fellow offers a spiritual solution. This Fellow got accustomed not to be surprised on what happens on campus. Fellow states that "it is how you do it, and how you say it." The Fellow argues that understanding shades of gray, yields more results. Ends with a question: "How can we create the best solution for everyone else?"

*Discussion Adjourned at 7:30 PM. The Meeting closed in Song. Notes were compiled by the Chronicler.*